

WORKPLACE BREASTFEEDING AND LACTATION SUPPORT
RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
May 20, 2003

PREAMBLE

Breastfeeding of an infant is an important and basic act of nurture to be encouraged in the interests of maternal, child and family health. The preamble sets forth the importance of supporting breastfeeding mothers as they plan their maternity leave and their return to work.

- ◆ HEALTH recognizes a mother's responsibility to her job and to her child when she returns to work and acknowledges that a woman's choice to breastfeed benefits the child, the mother, society-at-large and the employer.
- ◆ The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that women breastfeed for at least the first twelve months of a child's life and urges that arrangements be made to provide for expressing breastmilk when the mother and child are separated.
- ◆ HEALTH recognizes that workplace policies supporting a woman's choice to breastfeed her child will further these important goals.

Rhode Island Department of Health Breastfeeding policy and procedure:

1. HEALTH shall provide reasonable work schedule flexibility including scheduling break time and work patterns, for an employee who chooses to express breast milk for or breastfeed her child.
2. The break time for a full day employee will include unpaid time not to exceed one (1) hour a day that shall, if possible, run consecutively with any break time already provided to the employee. This break time must be at such times during the day as to allow the employee to maintain milk supply and comfort.
3. To facilitate a breastfeeding mother's return to work, the employee should request from her supervisor the development a breastfeeding and lactation support plan. This request can happen prior to, or during maternity leave or when the employee returns to work. Once the request is made the supervisor will contact HEALTH Human Resources staff and all three parties will develop a mutually satisfactory plan that includes the flexibility issues raised in this policy.
4. HEALTH will provide a secure and sanitary room or other location in close proximity to the work area other than a toilet stall where an employee can express her milk or breastfeed her child privately with other nursing mothers.
5. Direct your comments, complaints and observations regarding this policy to Family Health's Breastfeeding coordinator (222-1380). All communications are confidential.